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TITLE: A Republican Study of Reducing The Risk, a Theory-Based Sexuality Curriculum for Adolescents (Published in August 1998, Journal of School Health)

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BACKGROUND/OBJECTIVES: Reducing The *Risk* (*R/R*), is a theory-based, sexuality education curriculum shown to influence the knowledge and behaviors of secondary students. This study determined whether the behavioral effects of the curriculum could be duplicated in a southern, rural state.

METHODS: The 28-item survey was administered to treatment ($N = 106$) and comparison ($N = 106$) groups before and 18 months after the curriculum was implemented. The comparison group consisted of five school districts matched to five treatment districts based on geographic location, racial distribution, and average per capita income.

RESULTS: When observing the post-test data for the 125 students who were not sexually active at pretest (treatment $N=69$; comparison $N=56$; $z=1.12$; $p>.05$), 19 of the 69 students (27.5%) in the treatment group and 24 of 56 students (42.9%) in the comparison group reported becoming sexually active. This difference was significant ($z=1.79$, $p>.05$), when comparing the treatment group with the comparison group, indicating that significantly fewer students became sexually active after receiving the *RTR* program. Seventeen of the 19 students (89%) in the treatment group who were sexually active at post-test and 11 of 24 (46%) in the comparison group used STD/HIV and pregnancy prevention. Data indicated significantly higher use of prevention in the treatment group ($z=2.98$, $p<.05$). Results from two questions about communication with parents indicated a significant increase in communication between students and their parents in the *RTR* group as compared to comparison group students. These questions concerned communication about birth control ($z=2.11$, $p<.05$) and communication about protection from STD/HIV ($z=2.19$, $p<.05$).

CONCLUSION: As research consistently confirms that theory-based programs are effective in influencing the actions of adolescents more school districts can feel secure in implementing programs that have demonstrated the ability to reduce the behaviors that result in teen pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases.

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